

SWRE POWER SOURCE

A Supplement to Oklahoma Living



CO-OP MEMBERS GIVE BACK A QUARTER OF A MILLION

Southwest Rural Electric's charitable foundation, Operation Round Up (ORU), awarded a total of \$41,650 in grants to the following groups and organizations in 2023:

1. First Methodist Church of Vernon Mission Kitchen
2. Vernon Meals on Wheels
3. Wilbarger Co. Child Welfare Board
4. Wilbarger St. Church of Christ Food Pantry
5. Altus Animal Welfare
6. Altus Salvation Army
7. Cyclone Education Foundation
8. Grace Child Development Center
9. Great Plains Literacy Council
10. Jackson County EMS
11. Navajo Public Schools – Elementary Library
12. Nehemiah Initiative of Altus
13. Operation C.A.R.E. of Jackson County
14. Southern Kiowa County Food Pantry
15. SWOK Community Action Group – Head Start
16. SWOK Community Action Group – Safe Haven
17. Tillman County Food Bank Foundation
18. Tipton Public Schools – Elementary Reading
19. Tipton Public Schools – High School English
20. Tipton Public Schools – Special Education
21. Warren Senior Citizens

Grant distributions are made possible by SWRE members who voluntarily “round up” their monthly electric bills to the nearest whole dollar. An enrolled member donates an average of 50 cents a month, or \$6 a year, to ORU. Funds from billing accumulate over the year and are given back to local organizations and nonprofits.

Since the foundation launched in 2018, ORU has given \$264,888 back to SWRE communities.

“The motto of the foundation is *small change changes lives*. You would never guess that members of a small rural electric co-op could turn 50 cents a month into a quarter of a million dollar gift,” said Rebecca Chambless, SWRE’s Director of Marketing. “ORU funds stay right here in SWRE’s service area. Donations come in from our members and are returned locally to our most vulnerable neighbors and organizations who are enhancing the quality of life in our communities. That’s the cooperative difference.”

SWRE members who are not enrolled in ORU can begin “rounding up” their bill at any time. Currently enrolled members are invited to join ORU *Plus*, where they can give beyond the monthly “rounded up” change and customize their donation to \$5, \$10 or more each month. Call member services at 1-800-256-7973 to join us in giving back.



Jeff Simpson, CEO

RELIABLE POWER FOR TODAY & TOMORROW

// Ringing in a new year sparks a sense of renewed hope and optimism about the future. As the CEO of Southwest Rural Electric, for me, it's a time to reflect on where we are and where we're going. At the heart of this reflection, I think about ways we can better serve you, the members of the cooperative.

Our team at SWRE is always looking ahead, exploring ways to innovate and utilize new technologies to improve our services. As our nation increasingly relies on electricity to power the economy, keeping the lights on has never been more important. We're committed to powering—and empowering—our community at a cost local families and businesses can afford.

So how are we working to ensure reliable and affordable power while adapting to a changing energy landscape and our community's evolving needs?

One critical component of reliable power is the mix of energy resources used to generate the electricity that keeps the lights on across our service area. You may not realize it, but SWRE doesn't generate electricity. Instead, we purchase it from our energy provider, Western Farmers Electric Cooperative (WFEC), and from there, we distribute it to homes and businesses throughout our community.

WFEC increasingly uses more electricity generated from renewable energy sources, but we still depend on a diverse energy mix to ensure reliable power is available to our members whenever they need it.

In addition to managing a reliable energy mix, SWRE is using technology to enhance our local grid, limit service disruptions and improve outage response times.

Advanced metering technology, also known as AMI, enables two-way communication between the co-op and consumers. In the event of a power outage, AMI helps pinpoint the exact location of the outage and can even analyze damaged or tampered meters. AMI helps SWRE save money with real-time data, and ultimately improves power reliability for our entire community.

Proactive tree trimming is another way we limit service disruptions. Scheduled trimming keeps power lines clear from overgrown limbs that are likely to fall. As technology advancements become more accessible, we anticipate using advanced mapping software to better maintain the environment while providing more reliable service.

One of the best methods for improving our services to you is monitoring trends and leading practices from other electric co-ops in Oklahoma, Texas, and across the country. Learning from other co-ops is one of the many benefits of the cooperative business model because for us, it's about cooperation, not competition.

As we turn our focus to 2024, SWRE will continue working to provide the safe, reliable, affordable electricity you expect and deserve—for today and tomorrow. //



GOING TO D.C. WITH SWRE

The 2024 Youth Tour Delegates



Megan Mitchell
Frederick High School



Trenton Carman
Altus High School

Congratulations to **Megan Mitchell** and **Trenton Carman** on being selected to attend Youth Tour in Washington D.C.!

Megan is the daughter of Brian and Kayla Mitchell and is a junior at Frederick High School.

Trenton is the son of Drew and Tephania Carman and is a junior at Altus High School.

Youth Tour is sponsored by electric cooperatives from all over the nation and has been an SWRE tradition since 1964.

This summer, both students will have the opportunity to see historic landmarks, visit monuments and memorials, meet with their elected officials, and make friendships with other teens from Oklahoma and Texas. All expenses are covered by SWRE on this week-long *trip of a lifetime*.



ICE ON POWER LINES IS A WEIGHTY SUBJECT



When it comes to getting electricity across power lines and into homes, ice can be a force to be reckoned with.



ICE ON DISTRIBUTION LINES

Ice can quickly lead to broken power poles and other pole equipment. Ice can also make falling tree branches 30x heavier and much more likely to break power lines.

ON A 300-FOOT SPAN OF 1-INCH-THICK POWER LINES

- 1/2 inch of ice adds 281 pounds of weight
- 1 inch of ice adds 749 pounds of weight
- 2 inches of ice adds 2,248 pounds of weight

WHEN ICE MELTS

Melting ice can cause power outages. If ice on the bottom (neutral) line melts before the lines above, it can cause the lines to touch.

OTHER ICE FACTS

- Damage can begin when ice exceeds 1/4 of an inch
- 1/2 inch of ice can cause a line to sag up to 12 inches
- Pressure can also be caused by a broken tree limb
- Both ice and melting ice can cause power outages



Source: Jerri Imgarten-Whitley and Victory Electric Cooperative

EMPLOYEES CELEBRATE MILESTONES

Loyal and experienced employees are the key to SWRE’s success. They work in all types of weather, day and night, seven days a week to make sure the cooperative members have electricity at the flip of a switch. Join us in celebrating the work anniversaries we observed in 2023!



Keith Jonas
Meter Technician



Justin Marsh
District Lineman



Jim McPherson
Project Manager



Gerald Simpson
District Lineman



Austin Huff
Construction Foreman

Southwest Rural Electric

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Bill Pay Options:

24/7 Bill Pay: 1-833-890-9510

SmartHub App or SWRE.com

Outage Reports:

24/7 Hotline: 1-833-590-0353

SmartHub App

SWRE is an equal opportunity provider and employer. SWRE *Power Source* is published monthly for distribution to members of SWRE and is produced by Rebecca Chambless.



**WE'RE
PROUD TO
POWER YOU.**